

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for establishing a distribution network, comprising:

receiving approval from a provider of content to allow a first distributor to act as a distributor of said content;

establishing a the first distributor of said content ~~capable of distributing said content~~ via transmission of an electronic signal; ~~and~~

providing a first non-monetary benefit to said first distributor as a result of said first distributor establishing a second distributor of said content,

wherein said providing comprises providing an indication of a location of the benefit,

wherein said providing comprises providing instructions describing how to receive the benefit, and

wherein said benefit is based on a reliability of the first distributor;

shifting the content to the first distributor from a third distributor based on a reliability level of the third distributor; and

monitoring at the first distributor a customer satisfaction of the second distributor.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a first distributor of content capable of distributing said content via transmission of an electronic signal includes at least one of the following:

providing a notification of availability of said benefit to said first distributor;

receiving a request from said first distributor to act as a distributor of said content;

registering said first distributor as part of a distribution network for said content;

~~receiving approval from a provider of said content to allow said first distributor to act as a distributor of said content;~~

granting a license to said first distributor to act as a distributor of said content; and

providing data to said first distributor indicative of said benefit.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing said content to said first distributor.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein said providing said content to said first distributor includes at least one of the following:

~~emailing said content to said first distributor;~~

instructing ~~another~~ the third distributor in said network to provide said content to said first distributor;

~~allowing said first distributor to retrieve said content;~~

providing data to said first distributor indicative of a location where said content is located;

providing data to said first distributor indicative of a location where said content can be retrieved by said first distributor;

providing a key to said first distributor that enables use of said content; and
providing a key to said first distributor that enables decryption of said content.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing a first benefit to said first distributor includes at least one of the following:

providing an indication to said first distributor of said first benefit;
applying the first benefit during a transaction involving said first distributor;
providing an instruction to a party to provide said first benefit to said first distributor; and
providing instructions to said first distributor regarding how said first distributor can receive said first benefit.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing said first distributor with a second benefit as a result of said second distributor establishing a third distributor of said content.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

providing said second distributor with a benefit as a result of said second distributor establishing a third distributor of said content.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said third distributor receives said content from said first distributor.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said third distributor receives said content from said second distributor.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said second distributor is capable of distributing said content via transmission of an electronic signal.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said content is in electronic format.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said content includes at least one of the following:

educational information;

an advertisement;

a survey;

a question;

an animation;

a sound file;

a music file;

a real-time feed of information;

streaming video;

streaming audio;

a movie file;

software;

a video clip;

a multimedia file;

an image;

text material; and

rich media.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first benefit is based, at least in part, on at least one of the following:

an amount per distribution of said content by said first distributor to another distributor;

an amount per distribution of said content by said second distributor;

an amount of content distributed by said second distributor;

an type of content distributed by said second distributor;

storage capacity of said second distributor;

physical location of said second distributor;

availability of said second distributor; and

amount of access of said second distributor by potential recipients of said content.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first benefit is based, at least in part, on at least one of the following:

an amount of content distributed by said first distributor;

a type of content distributed by said first distributor;

storage capacity of said first distributor;

physical location of said first distributor;

availability of said first distributor;

amount of access of said first distributor by potential recipients of said content;

and

an amount per distribution of said content by said first distributor to a recipient of said content.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

allowing said first distributor to provide said content to said second distributor.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving said content.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first distributor is part of a network of at least one distributor for said content.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first benefit includes at least one of the following:

- a monetary amount;
- a discount applicable towards purchase of said content;
- a discount applicable towards a cost of a license to use said content;
- a non-monetary amount;
- a coupon; and
- frequent flyer miles.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing to said first distributor an indication of a desired attribute for a new distributor of said content.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining at least one desired attribute for a new distributor of said content.

21. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining at least one attribute of said content.

22. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

notifying said first distributor of an availability of said first benefit prior to said establishing a first distributor of content.

23. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

notifying said first distributor of an availability of said first benefit prior to said providing a benefit to said first distributor as a result of said first distributor establishing a second distributor of said content.

24. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing said content to said second distributor.

25. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a notification from said first distributor that said first distributor has established said second distributor.

26. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

monitoring performance of said first distributor.

27. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

monitoring performance of said second distributor.

28. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising at least one of the following:

receiving a payment for said content from a recipient of said content;

receiving a payment for said content from said first distributor; and

receiving a payment for said content from said second distributor.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for participating in a distribution network, comprising:

receiving approval from a provider of content to be allowed to act as a distributor of said content;

establishing at least one distributor of content; and

receiving a non-monetary benefit based, at least in part, on said establishing at least one distributor of said content, wherein said receiving comprises receiving an indication of a location of the benefit,

wherein said receiving comprises receiving instructions describing how to receive the benefit, and

wherein said benefit is based on a reliability of the distributor;

receiving content, said content being shifted from an unreliable distributor based on a reliability level of the unreliable distributor; and

monitoring the at least one distributor to determine a customer satisfaction of the at least one distributor.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

receiving said content.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein said receiving said content includes at least one of the following:

receiving said content via transmission of an electronic signal;

receiving said content via transmission of a wireless signal;

receiving said content from another distributor of said content;

receiving data indicative of a location where said content is located;

receiving data indicative of a location from which said content is retrievable; and

receiving a key that enables decryption of said content.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein said establishing at least one distributor of said content includes at least one of the following:

receiving a request from a party to act as a distributor of said content;

registering said at least one distributor as part of a distribution network for said content;

~~receiving approval from a provider of said content to allow said at least one distributor to act as a distributor of said content;~~

granting a license to said at least one distributor to act as a distributor of said content; and

providing data to said at least one distributor indicative of said benefit.

33. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

providing an identifier of said content to said at least one distributor.

34. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

providing said content to said at least one distributor.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein said providing said content to said at least one distributor includes at least one of the following:

instructing another distributor in said network to provide said content to said at least one distributor;

allowing said at least one distributor to retrieve said content;

providing data to said at least one distributor indicative of a location where said content is located;

providing a key to said at least one distributor that enables use of said content;
and

providing a key to said at least one distributor that enables decryption of said content.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein said receiving a benefit based, at least in part, on said establishing at least one distributor of said content includes ~~at least one of~~ the following:

~~receiving an indication of a location of said benefit;~~

receiving a description of said benefit; ~~and~~

~~receiving instructions how to receive said benefit.~~

37. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

providing to said at least one distributor an indication of a desired attribute for a new distributor of said content.

38. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

determining at least one desired attribute for a new distributor of said content.

39. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

determining at least one attribute of said content.

40. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

receiving data indicative of at least one desired attribute for a new distributor of said content.

41. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

receiving a notification indicative of availability of said benefit.

42. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:
- providing a notification upon said establishing at least one distributor of said content that said at least one distributor has been established.
43. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:
- monitoring performance of said at least one distributor.
44. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:
- receiving payment for said content from a recipient of said content.
45. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:
- receiving payment for said content from said at least one distributor.
46. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising:
- providing payment for said content to another party.
47. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein said content is in an electronic format.
48. (Withdrawn) A method for maintaining a distribution network, comprising:

determining a requirement of a network for distribution of content, wherein said content is in electronic form and said network includes at least one distributor of said content;

determining at least one desired attribute for a distributor of said content, wherein said attribute is based, at least in part, on said requirement; and

providing an indication of said desired attribute.

49. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, wherein said requirement includes at least one of the following:

a current requirement for said network to respond to requests for said content;

a current requirement for said network to provide said content to at least one recipient;

a current requirement for said network to store said content;

a future requirement for said network to respond to requests for said content;

a future requirement for said network to provide said content to at least one recipient;

a future requirement for said network to store said content;

a current minimum delivery requirement associated with said content;

a current minimum storage requirement associated with said content;

an expected minimum delivery requirement associated with said content; and

an expected minimum storage requirement associated with said content.

50. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, wherein said requirement includes at least one of the following:

- a minimum level of ability of a distributor in said network to transmit said content;

- a minimum level of ability of a distributor in said network to store said content;

- a minimum percentage of availability of a distributor in said network;

- a minimum amount of accessibility of a distributor in said network of said content by a potential recipient of said content;

- a minimum storage capability of a distributor in said network;

- a specific physical location of a distributor in said network;

- a specific topological location of a distributor in said network;

- a specific configuration of hardware used by a distributor in said network of said content;

- a minimum transmission capability of a distributor in said network;

- a minimum satisfaction level associated with at least one recipient of said content from a distributor in said network;

- a minimum level of ability by a distributor in said network to respond to requests from potential recipients of said content; and

- a minimum number of distributions of said content by a distributor in said network.

51. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, wherein said determining at least one desired attribute for a distributor of said content includes at least one of the following:

determining an attribute that will help said network meet said requirement if a distributor having said attribute is added to said network; and

determining an attribute that will help said network meet said requirement if a distributor already in said network develops said attribute.

52. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, wherein said attribute includes at least one of the following:

- an affiliation with a designated organization;
- a minimum mobility characteristic;
- a minimum processing capability;
- a designated hardware configuration;
- a designated software configuration;
- a minimum reliability level;
- a minimum operational characteristic;
- a minimum availability to a potential recipient of said content;
- a minimum accessibility by a potential recipient of said content;
- a minimum storage capability;
- a physical location;
- a topological location;
- a minimum transmission capability; and
- a minimum bandwidth.

53. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising:

providing a benefit to a distributor in said network that develops said attribute.

54. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising:

providing a benefit to a party that establishes a distributor in said network that has said attribute.

55. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising:

providing a notification of a benefit available to a party that establishes a distributor in said network that has said attribute.

56. (Currently Amended) A system for establishing at least one distributor of content, comprising:

a memory;

communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

receive approval from a provider of content to allow a first distributor to act as a distributor of said content;

establish a the first distributor of said content via transmission of an electronic signal;

provide a first non-monetary benefit to said first distributor as a result of said first distributor establishing a second distributor of said content, wherein said providing comprises providing an indication of a location of the benefit, wherein said providing comprises providing instructions describing how to receive the benefit, and wherein said benefit is based on a reliability of the first distributor;

shifting the content to the first distributor from a third distributor based on a reliability level of the third distributor; and

monitoring at the first distributor a customer satisfaction of the second distributor.

~~establish a first distributor of content capable of distributing said content via transmission of an electronic signal; and~~

~~provide a benefit to said first distributor as a result of said first distributor establishing a second distributor of said content.~~

57. (Currently Amended) A system for establishing at least one distributor of content, comprising:

a memory;

communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

receive approval from a provider of content to be allowed to act as a distributor of said content;

establish at least one distributor of content; and

receive a non-monetary benefit based, at least in part, on said establishing at least one distributor of said content, wherein said receiving comprises receiving

an indication of a location of the benefit, wherein said receiving comprises receiving instructions describing how to receive the benefit, and wherein said benefit is based on a reliability of the distributor;

receive content, said content being shifted from an unreliable distributor based on a reliability level of the unreliable distributor; and

monitor the at least one distributor to determine a customer satisfaction of the at least one distributor.

establish a distributor of content capable of distributing said content via transmission of an electronic signal; and

receive a benefit as a result of said establishing a distributor of said content.

58. (Currently Amended) A computer program product in a computer readable medium for rewarding a distributor of content, comprising:

first instructions for receiving approval from a provider of content to allow a first distributor to act as a distributor of said content;

second instructions for establish a the first distributor of said content via transmission of an electronic signal;

third instructions for provide a first non-monetary benefit to said first distributor as a result of said first distributor establishing a second distributor of said content, wherein said providing comprises providing an indication of a location of the benefit, wherein said providing comprises providing instructions describing how to receive the benefit, and wherein said benefit is based on a reliability of the first distributor;

fourth instructions for shifting the content to the first distributor from a third distributor based on a reliability level of the third distributor; and

fifth instructions for monitoring at the first distributor a customer satisfaction of the second distributor.

~~first instructions for determining a first distributor of content capable of distributing said content via transmission of an electronic signal; and~~

~~second instructions for sending a first benefit to said first distributor as a result of said first distributor establishing a second distributor of said content.~~